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New Elder Justice Center provides safe space for victims of elder abuse

For Eliza Bryant Village
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Adult Protective Services in Cuyahoga County investigates more than 4,000 allegations of elder abuse each year and opens about 200 cases per month. Some are cases of financial exploitation. Others involve physical abuse.



Celebrate the opening of the Elder Justice Center at the Crystal Ball Gala on Saturday, March 7.

Each and every case has something in common: There's no safe place in Greater Cleveland tailored for older adults where victims can go and get out of harm's way.

That's changing this year.

A new Elder Justice Center is open on the 17-acre Eliza Bryant Village campus in Cleveland. The Elder Justice Center provides temporary safe housing and support services for older adults, ages 62 and up, who are victims of abuse, violence, trauma and/or criminal victimization.

The Elder Justice Center is the only facility of its kind in Ohio.

"There are currently very limited options for shelter for older adults," said Danny R. Williams, JD, MNO, LNHA, President & CEO of Eliza Bryant Village. "Our new Elder Justice Center is a much-needed service to help support and connect older victims to resources to help them return to a safe environment."

A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new facility is March 2, with a Crystal Ball Gala celebration set for 6 p.m. Saturday, March 7, at the St. Clair Ballroom, 100 Saint Clair Ave. NE. More than 300 of Greater Cleveland's strongest advocates for older adults are expected to take part in the black-tie optional gala featuring dinner, auctions, raffles, live entertainment and dancing. Buy a ticket today to reserve a seat for this historic celebration. Sponsorship opportunities also are available.

One out of every 10 seniors age 60 and older has experienced some type of elder abuse or neglect, according to the National Council on Aging. As many as 2 million seniors are abused, exploited or neglected each year, and many more cases likely go unreported.

According to Cuyahoga County APS, nearly a quarter of the cases involve neglect or abandonment by a family member or someone else in a caretaker role. Approximately one-fifth of the elder abuse cases are the result of exploitation, where someone known to the older adult is taking advantage of that person for their own personal gain without the victim even knowing it. About one out of every seven cases involves physical abuse or emotional abuse through threats and coercion.



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The Elder Justice Center connects victims to the various legal, financial and social service supports they may need to get them back into a safe situation. Victims are referred by hospitals and social service organizations such as Adult Protective Services (APS).

Currently, APS refers victims of elder abuse to temporary shelters or hospital settings to deal with any acute medical and cognitive issues while identifying a safe, long-term living situation.

“The shelters are very scary places and they’re not very friendly to older adults who might have some physical limitations,” said Natasha Pietrocola, deputy administrator of Cuyahoga

County’s Division of Senior and Adult Services. “The Elder Justice Center is a place being designed with the needs of older adults in mind and is a critical step to help some older adults re-establish dignity and control in their lives.”

The caseload figures are expected to increase in the years to come as Baby Boomers continue to age and older adults become the country’s “New Majority.” By 2030, one of every five Americans will be age 65 and older, according to projections by the U.S. Census Bureau. There are about 50 million Americans age 65 and older now, and that number is expected to double by 2060.

There are more than 300,000 older adults living in Cuyahoga County, according to the Center for Community Solutions, and by 2030 there will be more county residents over age 65 than children and teens under age 20.



Before the Elder Justice Center, Eliza Bryant Village used this space to care for skilled nursing residents. Today, the Village continues to serve seniors with skilled nursing services, adult day care and affordable independent housing in addition to the new program helping seniors suffering from abuse.

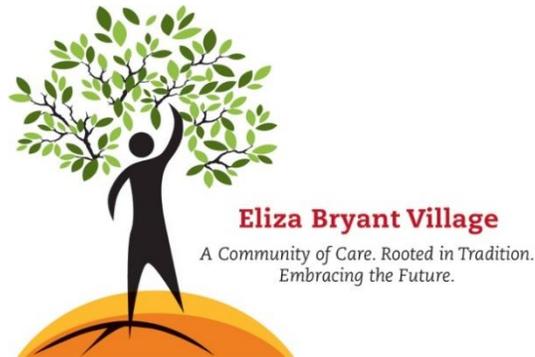
In addition to an increasing population of seniors, more of those older adults are now “aging in place” – continuing to live independently in their own homes longer, with support coming to them as needed. As they age in place, some older adults are suffering social isolation as well as physical and cognitive impairments that make them more vulnerable to abuse.

While staying at the new Elder Justice Center, vulnerable adults will be safe as staff works through community partnerships to coordinate social support services such as legal counseling, food assistance and other essential resources needed for the victim to return to a safe living environment. Today, there are two rooms serving guests. The remaining seven private suites will be open by the end of February 2020.

The Elder Justice Center is the newest program offered at Eliza Bryant Village with funding from the Ohio Attorney General's Victim of Crime Assistance grant. For nearly 125 years, Eliza Bryant Village has been meeting the needs of aging adults and their caregivers by providing care with dignity and respect. The Village's enhanced programs and services throughout its campus include art, massage and music therapy to help seniors heal from trauma, violence or crime they have experienced during the course of their lifetime.

Eliza Bryant Village provides more than \$1 million each year in charity care. Proceeds from the Crystal Ball Gala benefit the Elder Justice Center, providing critically needed shelter and support to older adults in need. To buy a ticket for the Crystal Ball Gala, [click here](#).

Learn more about the new Elder Justice Center and other services at Eliza Bryant Village such as skilled nursing, senior outreach services with an adult day care program, transportation, home care, dialysis or independent housing. Visit their website or call 216-361-6141.



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